MONTEREY NEWS

February 2009
VOLUME XXXIX · Number 2

The Town

Financial Matters

The Board of Assessors continues to work on the real estate revaluation mandated by the state and has mailed reassessment letters to all taxpayers. In general, assessments have gone up for open land and down for buildings.

The Assessors will set the new tax rate for the current fiscal year in February. Three preliminary tax bills have been issued, based on last year's assessments and tax rate ($5.10 per thousand). The fourth quarter bills, which will be mailed in March and due on May 1, will reflect the new assessments and new tax rate. The Assessor's Office is open from 9 a.m. until noon every day through February 7 to answer questions about assessments.

Barbara Gauthier, Town Accountant, discussed the matters of health insurance for elected officials and of writing a job description for the Town Clerk.

The Employee Compensation Committee, at their meeting on January 15, made the recommendation to the Select Board to have a standardized policy, effective July 1, 2009, that health insurance is only available to full-time employees, and that elected and part-time employees are not eligible. The committee also recommended that the Board of Registrar's Clerk and the Town Clerk positions be consolidated into one position, and that the parameters of that position and salary be clarified.

The committee also recommended that Monterey's current vacation policy be

Frank D'Amato won the Grand Prize in the Monterey Cultural Council's 2007 Photo Contest and Exhibition. Get out your cameras because the council is sponsoring another contest this year. *See p. 4.*

changed to one week after a year, two weeks after two years, three weeks after five years, and four weeks after eleven years.

The bill from Foresight Engineering in the amount of $4,000 for surveying the town beach was presented to Ms. Gauthier.

The Select Board declared a snow emergency in order to be able to continue paying plowing, salting, and sanding costs.

The general economic climate is a concern. Dan Moriarty and Mary Ellen Brown from the Finance Committee met with the Select Board, and a meeting was set for Monday, February 2, at 5 p.m., during the Select Board meeting, which is open to the public, to talk about setting priorities for the next year's budget.

Moriarty also talked about a budget and job description for the Tree Warden.

West Rd. Development Proposal

Shaun Tucker of Pearl Realty, surveyor Mike Parsons, attorney Phil Heller, and Brian Puntin of the Planning Board attended a Select Board meeting to introduce their proposal for a housing project on 14 acres on West Road, off Route 57. A sixteen-lot subdivision is proposed, with 25 percent affordable housing. Shaun Tucker said that he is planning a "small, quality, affordable middle-income development, on one-quarter to one-third acre lots, with individual site-built houses (as opposed to prefabs)." This proposal would be presented to the state to fulfill the affordable housing mandate in Monterey (40B), but only after all relevant Monterey boards and committees approve. The Select Board made it clear that, while not granting approval of the project (which isn't their job), they were giving permission for Tucker to present his development plans for the recommendations of all boards and committees. The surveying firm is Kelly, Grangers, & Parsons Associates, Inc., of Great Barrington.

Lake Buel News

Dan Moriarty, Sue Protheroe, and Kyle Pierce of the Lake Buel Watershed Committee attended the meeting of the Lake Buel Prudential Committee at the Town Hall on Monday, January 26. Chris Cobb, Chris Hassett, Pat Mielke, Dave Logan, and Paula Hatch were present from the Prudential Committee, and Fred Vorck, who represents both committees. Dan Moriarty presented a proposed maintenance budget for the Lake Buel outlet, to be included in the Lake Buel District Meeting warrant. The goal of the Watershed Committee is to have some control over the lake level to prevent flooding, both by making sure the outlet is clear of blockage and by researching and developing a water control device at the outlet to maintain a mutually beneficial lake level for all purposes. Further funding for these endeavors will be aggressively pursued at the state and federal levels.

Highway Matters

The 2007 4500 truck was towed to Waterbury, the closest location, for what was believed to be an electrical issue.

Barry Karson of Fairview Road sent a letter to the Select Board saying that a tree on Fairview Road near a utility pole was damaged in the ice storm, and he thought it should be removed. The Select Board sent Mr. Karson a letter saying that his letter has been forwarded to the Tree Warden, Roger Tryon, so that he can determine the condition of the tree.

A revised letter about the salt shed is being sent to the new Secretary of Transportation, James Aloisi.

Other News

The Board unanimously approved Building Commissioner Don Torrico's recommendation to appoint Alan Deverry as the Alternate Electrical Inspector.

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Kent Godfrey caught himself in the mirror at the corner of Main Road and New Marlborough Road.

Nora Hayes, the Animal Control Officer, discussed her concerns about rabies prevention, hoping to schedule a slot on WSBS. She also had concerns about proper vaccination and licenses for Gould Farm animals; it was suggested that in addition to meeting Gould Farm regulations, Gould Farm should share that information with the town.

There was discussion about where to bring stray dogs if Marge Gulick's office is closed. Several options were presented, such as contacting Animal Control in Lee, or placing two used kennels in an undetermined location, to be researched by Director of Operations Maynard Forbes, the Building Inspector, and the Town Treasurer.

— Sue Protheroe

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February 18 Community Dinner

At the January potluck dinner, we enjoyed Lin Shreiber's presentation of "Revolutionizing Retirement," a primer on looking at one's retirement years as a new beginning with new challenges. It was a fascinating and provocative evening and left many of us with a renewed enthusiasm for the "Golden Years."

For the February 18th potluck, we are lucky to have local author and dermatologist Dr. Richard Greene speak on his two novels, *Midnight Rounds* and *The Day After Midnight* (a sequel), set in Berkshire County. They relate the story of a young doctor who becomes forced to provide medical care secretly to organized crime members in Springfield and his efforts to extricate himself. Both novels show the dark side of doctorhood, the difficulties of making a diagnosis, the problems of blending a personal life with a professional one, and the larger issues of healthcare in the twenty-first century.

The February Monterey Community Potluck Dinner will be held Wednesday, February 18, at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share and a place setting and silverware for yourself.

All are welcome!

— Kyle Pierce

Monterey Photo Contest and Exhibition

In 2007, fifty-one local photographers—of all ages and levels of expertise—submitted over 100 photographs for the first Monterey Photography Contest and Exhibition. During the four days that the photos were on display at the Meetinghouse, a steady stream of residents and visitors came to see this visual celebration of our town. Few Cultural Council events have generated such positive comments and requests to "Do it again!" So, we are.

The second Monterey Photo Contest and Exhibition is scheduled for Labor Day weekend 2009. A prospectus is in the works with more logistic details, but generally the guidelines will be the same as last time: photos must be taken in Monterey; they must be ready to hang (matting and framing preferred) and cannot exceed 30 inches (including the size of the matting); and they cannot be photos that appeared in the 2007 exhibition. The contest is open to all ages, and submissions may be in any medium or style: color, black-and-white, film, digital, etc. Each artist may submit up to three photographs, and at least one photograph by each entrant will be hung in the exhibition at the discretion of the Monterey Cultural Council. Subjects may include anything taken in Monterey, including landscapes, interiors, architecture, people, animals, or nature. This announcement comes early so photographers will have plenty of time for picture-taking and several seasons in which to portray our town.

Guitar player at Monterey Meetinghouse concert (by Ron Goldfinger).

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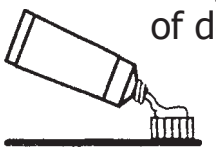

528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

Ice patterns on a window when it's -12 degrees outside. (Photo Jake Krans)

New Features on Town Website

Online versions of the Town Zoning Bylaws and the Town Bylaws are now available on the town website, www.montereyma.gov; click on the "bylaws" link on the left. A new frequently asked questions section can also be found by clicking on the "FAQs" link on the left. We will be updating this regularly as frequent questions trickle in.

You can also sign up to receive meeting minutes, agendas, news and events, and much more; just click on the "Subscribe to News" button on the bottom right corner of the town website. It is an opt-in process, so when you submit your request, an email will be sent to you that you will need to reply to confirming your subscription. If you sign up for multiple announcements you will need to do this for each one.

You can also now request property cards and plot plans through the website. Go to www.montereyma.gov and click on "Town Government and Departments," then click on "Board of Assessors" (scroll about halfway down the page). On their department page you will find a link called "property card request"; click that link and fill in the necessary information and hit submit. Your card(s) will then be faxed to you within 2 business days of the Assessors' normal office hours.

If you don't see something on the site you think may be useful, email your suggestions to townmont@verizon.net.

— Melissa Noe
Interdepartmental Secretary

❊

Dennis J. Downing
Attorney at Law

❊

17 Mahaiwe Street
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Massachusetts 01230

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Wednesday .....3–5 p.m.
Thursday .....4–6 p.m.
Saturday .. 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
.....7–9 p.m.

Phone 528-3795

Monterey Library Notes

CWMARS

It's hard to believe that the Monterey Library has been a member of CWMARS for a year. The staff and I are still learning how best to use the many and varied features of this automated system. We know many of you have used it as well, and in many cases have taught us some great features as well as the little quirks that somehow can be frustrating if you're not able to deal with them. We considered holding sessions to help people learn to use the system, but we've found that the best way to learn is to sit down at your computer at home and try it, or come down to the library and do what you need to do here where we can help everyone individually. Please don't hesitate to come down and tell us your problems. The system is so vast it has problems, and if we can't help you, we know whom to contact. One bit of information that I found many patrons don't realize is that almost all of the items you can find on the CWMARS catalog (it is divided into Central and Western regions because it was too big to fit into one catalog) can be requested and will be delivered right to Monterey, usually within the week. This includes videos—and there are still a lot of VHS cassettes of older classic movies out there. Finally, just because you can't find what you want in the system doesn't mean we can't get it. Come down and ask us because we have other ways to get interlibrary loans.

February Events at the Library

On Saturday, February 14, at 10:30 a.m. Denise Andrus will lead a craft for Valentine's Day session for the kids. Bring your kids down and they can do a last minute handmade Valentine to surprise someone!

On Monday, February 23, at 7:00 p.m., Kent Godfrey, a Monterey resident, will present a very informal talk about his Peace Corps experience on the island of St. Lucia and the Peace Corps in general. This talk will take place during National Peace Corps Week. Kent will discuss the challenges and triumphs of his experience. The program will be valuable for people considering applying to the Peace Corps and interesting for people who are just curious.

Adult Book Discussion Group

Several people are interested in forming a book discussion club for adults. The library is more than happy to facilitate this group, but we need to know if people are interested and, in particular, if someone would like to organize this. There is a signup sheet at the library desk, or you can call or email if you are interested. A primary task of the volunteer organizer would be to find out what books people are interested in discussing.

— Mark, Makuc, Library Director

Monterey Democrats to Caucus

Registered Democrats in Monterey will be holding a caucus at the Monterey United Church of Christ on Main Road on Saturday, February 7, at 10 a.m. to elect one delegate and one alternate to the 2009 Massachusetts Democratic Convention.

The convention will be held on Saturday, June 6, at the MassMutual Center in Springfield. At that time, Democrats from across the state will gather to adopt a party platform. Mr. David Plouffe, the man who managed Obama's historic campaign will be the keynote speaker. The caucus is open to all registered Democrats in Monterey.

There will be a Democratic Town Committee Meeting immediately following the caucus.

For caucus or town committee information please contact Chair Muriel Lazzarini at 528-5796 or malazz@verizon.net.

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Daffodil Days Campaign

It is daffodil time again. The American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days Campaign, which runs from February 1–26, is in full swing! Look ahead to the first week of spring by placing an order today.

Your purchase supports the more than 35,000 people in Massachusetts who will find out this year that they have cancer. A beautiful bouquet ($10), a limited edition Boyds Bear with a bouquet ($25), or potted bulbs ($15) will bring a smile to anyone. Please support this wonderful cause and the Monterey campaign by placing an order when our volunteer calls or by contacting Pat Mielke at 528-5603. The Monterey campaign was third in Berkshire County last year; lets try to reach first for 2009.

Kenn Basler, at the Monterey General Store, has, once again offered to take delivery and pass out orders. The pick-up day will be March 18.

Place your order today!!

— Pat Mielke

TOWN OF MONTEREY

Skating Rink Hours / Winter 2008–2009

Firehouse Pavilion

MONDAY–FRIDAY

Dawn to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey Time
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Public Skating (may be closed for ice-making at this time; skaters may be asked to leave the ice)
7:00 p.m. on,	Hockey
except Thursday	Public Skating

SATURDAY

9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Kids / Family Hockey
Noon to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	CLOSED
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.	Public Skating

SUNDAY

9 a.m. to Noon	Pickup Hockey
Noon to 3:00 p.m.	Public Skating
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Kids/Family Hockey
After 5 p.m.	CLOSED for major icemaking repair

Skating rink hours are dawn to 9 p.m.; if finishing a game after 9 p.m., please be considerate of your neighbors and keep it quiet.

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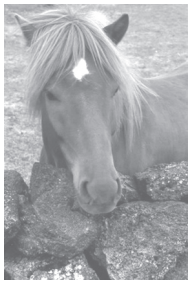

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Monterey Library Recent Acquisitions

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Children of Huang Shi
Brideshead Revisited
Family That Preys
Fireproof
Duchess
Burn after Reading
Fly Me to the Moon
Peter and the Wolf
Babylon AD
Mamma Mia

Adult Fiction
Red Convertible, Louise Erdrich
Plum Spooky, Janet Evanovich
Scarpetta, Patricia Cornwell
Agincourt, Bernard Cornwell
Tokyo Fiancée, Amelie Nothomb

Adult Nonfiction
Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell
Sand, Michael Welland
The Bible and the People, Lori Anne Ferrell
American Cheeses, Clark Wolf
Rebound! Basketball, Busing, Larry Bird and the Rebirth of Boston, Michael Connelly

Young Adult
Eon Dragoneye Reborn, Allison Goodman
Graceling, Kristin Cashore
The Fetch, Laura Whitcomb

Children
Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life, Molly Bang
Gettysburg: The Graphic Novel, C. M. Butzer
Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek, Deborah Hopkinson
Washington at Valley Forge, Russell Freedman
Baron von Baddie and The Ice Ray Incident, George McClements
We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures
Boy on the Brink, David McPhail

Census Recruiter at Town Hall

A Recruiting Assistant from the U.S. Census Bureau will be at the Monterey Town Hall on Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. administering tests for applicants interested in a U.S. Census job. You do not need to sign up to take the test, but if you would like to schedule an appointment please call Kim Van Dyke at 413-684-1353. If you would like more information about the test or additional locations and test times or have census job questions, call the toll free census number, 866-861-2010.

— Melissa Noe
Interdepartmental Secretary

School Vacation SKATING PARTY!

Monterey Ice Skating Rink
Fire House Pavillion

Saturday, February 21
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
(Weather & ice conditions permitting. Check signs outside rink to make sure it is open.)

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Non-skaters are encouraged to bring sleds to play and sled outside in the snow!

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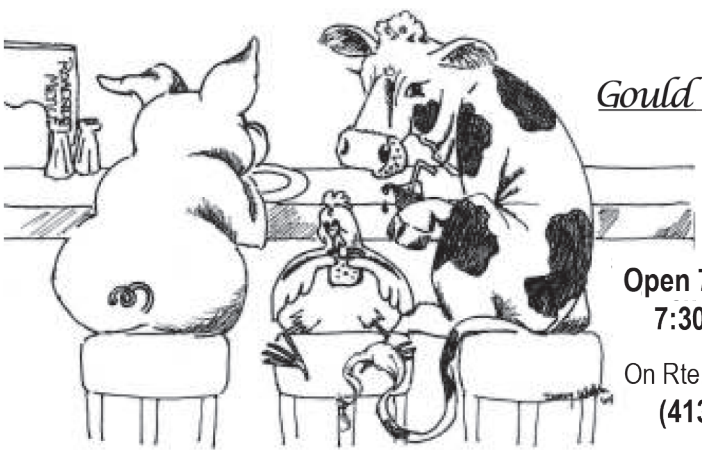

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Sprout Films at Triplex

The Sprout Touring Film Festival returns to Great Barrington for the second year in a row on Saturday, February 7, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The screening of short films related to the field of developmental disabilities takes place at the Triplex Cinema and is sponsored by CATA (Community Access to the Arts), The Triplex, Black Ice Entertainment, Catherine & Matt Mandel, and Ben & Elaine Silberstein. Tickets are $10 for adults. Children under 18 are admitted free.

Sprout films are for, by, and about people with developmental disabilities. The films come from several different countries and cover many genres, including documentary, performance, and animation. Anthony di Salvo, founder of the Sprout Film Festival, will be on hand to give a brief introduction to the films. Di Salvo says, "The goal is an enjoyable and enlightening experience that will help break down stereotypes, promoting a greater acceptance of differences and awareness of similarities." Last year over one hundred people attended the film event.

New this year is an additional screening for special education students of Berkshire County as well as teachers and caregivers. It will take place on February 6 from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Duffin Theatre at Lenox Memorial High School. The free screening is sponsored by the local cultural councils of Alford-Egremont, Dalton, Lenox, and Otis. For more information, contact Kathryn Bos, special education teacher at Lenox Memorial High School, 413-637-5560.

CATA is a local arts organization that nurtures and celebrates the creativity of people with disabilities through shared experiences in the visual and performing arts. For more information, call 413-528-5485 or visit www.communityaccesstothearts.org.

Lincoln's 200th Birthday Party at Berkshire South

An "After School Birthday Party" to celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln is planned for Thursday, February 12, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Berkshire South Regional Community Center on Crissey Road in Great Barrington. This is a public program with no charge. Events include a high school essay contest, art projects for children, readings and presentations by Dennis Krausnick of Shakespeare & Company, and a monumental birthday cake donated by Cake Walk in Lee. Elementary students are invited to bring birthday cards to President Lincoln and classroom artwork related to the Lincoln Bicentennial can be displayed at the Community Center.

The event is cosponsored by Chesterwood, Berkshire South Regional Community Center, Norman Rockwell Museum, and Representative Smitty Pignatelli.

Chesterwood's Special Lincoln Bicentennial Programming for May 1 to October 31, 2009, will be announced at the event.

Know Your Health Numbers

In the evolving world we live in numbers are a part of our everyday existence. Some affect our financial health, others our physical health. The numbers we are urging you to become aware of is your cholesterol. Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in all cells of your body and among the fats in your bloodstream. It is very important for our health, related to cell membrane growth and some hormones. There are two sources of cholesterol: food and your body. Genetic testing of your cholesterol can give you a preview of your heart health risks. Elevated levels of cholesterol may cause cardiovascular disease, which can lead to a heart attack. Prevention is the key. Management of cholesterol is pertinent. Let's look at a few measures to evaluate often.

- **Free cholesterol screening:** 3rd Tuesday/monthly, 10 a.m.–noon, Town Hall.
- **Diet:** Decrease saturated fat. Eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- **Be Active:** During winter months walk around open gymnasiums in the area.
- **Maintain a healthy weight**. Your BMI (body mass index) can be a measuring tool. Weight in pounds/Height in inches/Height in inches X 703 = BMI. BMI of 25+ is considered overweight/obese.
- **Talk openly with your provider**. Write down questions before appointment.

February is American Heart Month. Information in this article was adapted from www.americanheart.org. CHP-Healthy Communities Access Project provides free cardiovascular screenings and health insurance enrollment assistance. For additional inquires, call 413-528-9311 ext. 2147.

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I, Barack Hussein Obama …

One of 1.8 million people, I feel the excitement filtering through my veins; I walk into the rising sun, which lights up the Washington Monument like a beacon. Children clutch parents' hands, bundled up against the bitter cold—cold for Washington anyway. They will tell their grandchildren that they were there. My camera snaps busily away as we (a group of four) park ourselves in front of one of the Jumbotrons, where at eight a.m. a rebroadcast begins of the concert at the Lincoln Memorial from the previous weekend. The sound is crisp and loud, and as the crowd thickens, so does the joyfulness in the air. The tendrils of cold have not yet worked their way into my feet. I have five layers on up top and I am a New Englander; I don't get cold.

We're ideally located away from the mass crowds, in front of the World War II Memorial. At around nine, my friend and I make a trip up the path to the Washington Monument to peer over the hill. All we see are heads and waving flags; we're probably just shy of a million at this early hour. The wind blows stronger and colder there. Our location once again proves its worth, and we return in time to see a group of people doing a simple dance—lined up in the street. What probably started as a group of friends became a group of strangers, but everyone feels like a friend today. Thank goodness for music and dancing, we join in and fight off the chill in the air for a while longer.

One of us goes and gets coffee and hot chocolate, and we huddle together at times for extra warmth. The crowd pours steadily into the Mall, across the open lawn toward the Washington Monument. When I turn around to glance behind me, there are children perched on a part of the World War II Memorial, eager to get a good a view of the screen that will show a historic moment in just a few short hours. As the parade begins on Pennsylvania, the members of Congress and other important individuals begin to filter out onto the inaugural platform. It takes them about an hour. We play "ID" that person—some I recognize from my days in the Senate halls. Ted Kennedy is escorted out first—he made it to see this incredible day as he promised he would.

As the ceremony begins, the crowd where we are—a place almost void of people that morning—is dense. An image of President Bush comes up on the screen; the crowd around us simultaneously boos, and for a split second I feel ashamed. Is that really necessary? There is little applause as he steps out of the Capitol onto the platform as president for the last time—no real surprise there. The camera cuts to Barack Obama as he waits to make his entrance, and there is a gasp around me. Many are probably thinking the same thing I am: Is it possible that this wise looking and solemn individual is about to become our 44th president? He looks more presidential than most in recent memory. We've seen his more relaxed side, but this is an incredible moment and one can see how seriously he is taking it. What a burden, but yet what a privilege. At that moment, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Most of the pre-ceremonial talking and benedictions are going by in a blur. Personally I am not one for the religious

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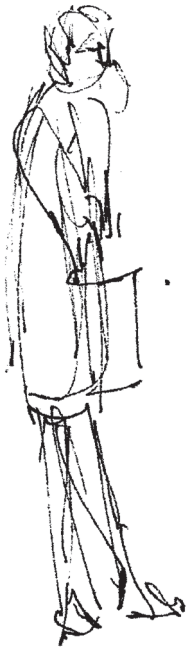
aspect of this ceremony, but it fits the moment in a way I can appreciate. The crowd is incredibly quiet considering the numbers, but we cheer in the right places. Then the President-elect steps up and places his hand on the Lincoln Bible, and Chief Justice Roberts bungles the wording—the entire crowd titters slightly. The two correct themselves somewhat (the oath would later be repeated), and then the Chief Justice shakes Obama's hand and says, "Congratulations, Mr. President." The crowd explodes.



The energy released seems to touch that beautiful clear blue sky. People jump up and down punching the air. My feet leave the ground, and a wave of hope and disbelief keeps me oddly suspended above reality. Just like that, we have a new president; the short oath that is written in the Constitution guaranteed that for a 44th time such power passed from one individual to another, and from one party in power to another; the transition was peacefully complete. The stage holding some of the most polarized political figures in the country unites behind this event, and what a celebration it is, how good it feels.

His speech—not a great one say many who have now weighed in—is genuinely moving for us standing there with fellow citizens. The pride I feel as an American citizen is unmatched in my lifetime. On September 11th, I felt patriotism and a deep sense of kinship with other Americans, but this is different. The energy and pride seems to resonate off every monument to all the individuals who sacrificed for this country. While I cringe at times when I feel we are being a world bully or policeman, today is different; today I feel at my core why I am proud to be an American. What the future brings is really anyone's guess: how bad the economy is going to get, how fast the oceans rise, and how long before we "pick ourselves up and dust ourselves off" remain to be seen.

The next night on television, there was a brief clip that was an ad for the network, which flashed across the screen with the tagline "Where were you when history was made?" I was not in front of my TV; I happily admit I spoke out loud: "I was there, I was there!"

President Obama—I still cannot write or say it without shivering inside or getting chills along my spine— is a symbol of how far we've come as a country and a shining example of the opportunities that we should treasure. He said it best: while his father may not have been served sixty years ago in a DC restaurant, he stands taking the oath of office as President of the United States. A barrier was surmounted but not for everyone; racial injustice still exists, but I believe this is a hopeful step forward. While governing politics will not change overnight, as resistance is already mounting from the GOP and divisions are growing within the Democratic Party, President Obama called on the American people that day. If his message resonates loudly enough to spur a country to its feet, then perhaps those pundits who point out there was no "fear itself" line or memorable "ask not" will eat their words. It was not a time for the great inaugural speeches. We need, and I think he provided, a plainspoken assessment of where we are. It was tinged with a historical flavor and a strong dose of hope.

I was there, and it was in the end, indescribable.

— Tarsi Dunlop

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Bridal song

Like the first days of creation
when you lie down by me
sun and earth shall float away
beyond the apple tree

stars will be above us
as when God first spoke
trembling in the shafting
of your every stroke

apples all around us
grown from seed of Eve
good and evil knowing
more than we conceive

serpent curled beside us
smiling in her sleep
at cries so like the flowers
that the meadows keep

like the first days of creation
a flushed and rosy tree
and fruit will fall on Eden
when you lie down by me.

— A. O. Howell

Peatfire

The flaring of the fire
to the Father Sun
from this peat
on this hearth
in this cot
in this cold
in this dark
of this heart

the flaring of the fire
to the Father Sun
even this peat
even this hearth
even this cot
even this night
even this cold
even this dark
leaps out to tell my aching heart
lifting flame goes back to flame
all is Other
all is One.

— A. O. Howell

Tough Times

The desert lies before us
sand for ever
endless sameness
where is the blue sea?

countless grains of sand
yet gods sweet earth
the same earth green of spring
unforgiving blessing bestowed

sleepless night awaits
endless time to myself
sun rises for some
the bus departs for the city

why was I born to them
purposeless
offspring of value
wanted more of the unknown

at some point time is out
rest for the weary desert traveler
just another night
this time with sleep

I swam in the deep white snow today
breatlhess moments of childlike play
one cup of steamy broth as reward
resting at the oasis before dawn.

— Bob Hirsch

Swimming in Spring Light

Swimming in spring light
Immersed in moss, bright, soft tufts
Floating in first green
Knocked against crow-cry
Rippling over emerald rock and stump
Glad for the gifts, the greetings
Never alone, I'm washed,
Immersed in immense frogsong
Held, loved, cradled
Among these trees

— E. Russo

Life of a Mouse

Pitter patter pitter patter
Beady eyes, slick tail

Pitter patter pitter patter
Scavenger, dirty fur

Pitter patter pitter patter
Cold feet, mouth of cheese

Pitter patter pitter patter
Escape artist, hunted, hated

Pitter patter pitter patter
Meow

— Judah Piepho

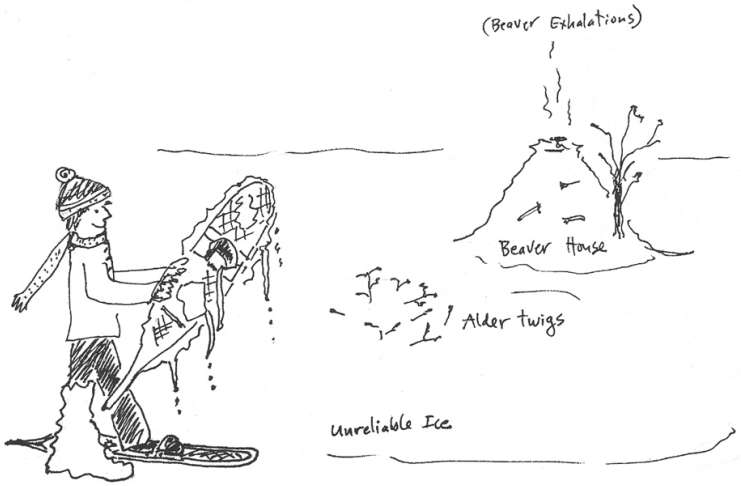
Beavers and Radical Abundance*

Ever since the economy and the ecology tanked, all God's children are climbing on the bandwagon with their new framings: Best thing that can happen is for Wall Street to implode. It's all imaginary wealth anyway. Running out of oil will save our environment, and just in time. Lots of people dying of war, famine, and disease? Well, it is painful, yes, but it is for the best, as we have an overpopulated planet.

It goes on and on, new books on the economy are multiplying like rabbits, or ticks. It seems like there is one born every second. Down at the Bronx Zoo I once saw a constant update on "acres of rainforest destroyed as we stand here," which was a board with numbers flashing by. You were meant to look at these numbers, (which eerily resemble the digits clicking away on the gas pump as the tank fills and the wallet empties) and somehow translate them into chainsaws and Amazon tree frogs.

We folks come equipped with grand imaginations, but mine is taxed to the max lately as I look back, look forward, do the math, and remember old Baba Ram Dass, who urged me to Be Here Now, instead of putting myself in all those imaginary places. When my brain is about to burst with the powers of my own imagination, I head for the swamp, where what you see is what you see.

This time of year my Swamp Here Now place of recovery is snowshoe accessible, but not totally. That is, there are soft spots, and every year I walk right into them again and again. This is because you can't actually see what you've got, only what you see. So what looks like continuous solid windswept snow on thick ice is really all that but on bits of open water. Kind of like the economy: step on it and down you go, snowshoe and all.



Yesterday I was cautious. We've been sub-zero here, repeatedly, but I do know that there is often a rim of open water right by the dam. You never know how broad this band is when it is under a foot or more of cakey wind-packed, insulating snowdrift. Without real ice under it, this stuff will not hold. I try to stay on the dam, but it is invisible under there and armed with nipped-off alder twigs. Get one through your webbing and try to take a step. Down you go, and maybe into that invisible band of slush and open water.

With all this danger, unseen but not unsuspected, you have to wonder why anyone would go to the swamp. I go to check on the beavers. They inspire me every time with their sustainable systems and Buddhist economics. They want what I want: food, shelter, a home for the family, someplace for the kids to play. Like me they are social. They make sweet little noises to each other.

The beavers in the swamp are living on speckled alder this winter, having put up a good supply under water before the pond froze. The tips of these branches are sticking up through the ice but I know that down under, many of them have been nipped off, taken to the lodge, had the bark eaten off, and then disposed of back under the ice again. These peeled twigs will show up in the spring, hundreds of them floating near the dam.

In our house we are living on winter squash, rutabagas, dry beans, and corn boiled with ashes. It is much more complicated than the alder economy of the beavers, but you don't have to build and

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maintain a dam. We are better at gardening. Also, at this point in our evolution, our stomachs could not take all that bark.

An article in a recent *New Yorker* magazine profiles some radical visionaries stocking their larders and taking out pistol permits. One guy plans to sail his boat around Lake Champlain trading for apples and then selling them in New York City. I guess he will sail down I-87 with his goods, or maybe work on a canal project for a while.

One of the new books, *Getting a Grip,* by Frances Moore Lappé, encourages us to reject the "spiral of powerlessness," which is based upon the idea that we suffer from a lack of goods and goodness. Rather, we should embrace the "spiral of empowerment," based upon the premise that we are supplied here on earth with plenty of goods and goodness.

Obviously, this is the one for me. I haul my left foot out of the water and take off the snowshoe. As soon as it hits the air it becomes a four-foot ice sculpture, handmade, graceful, and weighty. The beavers are in their house, nibbling and grooming, mewing and chuckling to each other. I am knocking the ice and frozen slush off my snowshoe and heading for home and more squash. We'll get through this, solving problems and magnifying our goodness. We'll slow those flashing numbers down with our vegetarianism, our local economies, and (don't forget the ice sculpture) art. We'll be here now, and in the spring when the ice melts we'll still be here now, thanks to this abundance.

*Radical Abundance is the title of the Januaey 22–23, 2009 Trinity Institute National Theological Conference in New York City. It was live webcast to 80 locations, and can be viewed online at trinitywallstreet.org/education/?institute-2009. Some great ideas, including the grassroots Transition Towns movement from the UK.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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Bartholomew's Cobble Events

Hot Chocolate Saturdays
Saturdays through March, 11am-4:00pm

Climb Hurlburt's Hill, then slip, slide, sled, ski, or trek to the Visitor's Center for free hot drinks. *Members and Sheffield Residents: FREE. Nonmembers: FREE with admission.*

Wildlife Tracks and Signs
Saturday February 14, 2-3:30pm

Join a naturalist to search for the tracks of coyote, bobcat, wild turkey, and the other animals that seek out the Cobble at this time of year. *Members: Individual $4; Family $12. Nonmembers: Individual $6; Family $15. Please pre-register to 413-229-8600.*

Big Trees of the Cobble
Saturday March 7, 2-3:30pm

There are some huge trees here. Enjoy them on a 2-mile hike or snowshoe. *Members: Individual $4; Family $12. Nonmembers: Individual $6; Family $15. Please pre-register to 413-229-8600.*

Coming This Spring

Hal Borland's Vernal Equinox (March 21); Life in the Vernal Pools (April 18); Guided Dusk Walk (April 18); Mother's Day Wildflower Walk and Tea (May 10); Wild Edibles Extravaganza (May 16); Father's Day Canoe Trip.

Directions to Bartholomew's Cobble

From Rt. 7 in Sheffield, MA, turn right on Rt. 7A and follow for 0.5 mile. Turn right on Rannapo Rd. and follow for 1.5 mile. Turn right on Weatogue Rd. to entrance and parking on left. Regular admission: free for members of the Trustees of Reservations and Sheffield residents; non-members $5 per adult, $1 per child.

For information or to register, please call 413-229-8600 or email bcobble@ttor.org.

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"Southern Justice"

In the summer of '63, the Chatahoochee Bar & Grill, in north Georgia redneck country, served fifty-cent draft beer in huge glass fishbowls that took two hands to hoist off the table. Just one of these monsters was enough to knock even an experienced drinker silly, so after three hours of Saturday night imbibing and shooting pool, every one of us except me, the designated driver, was incapable of coherent conversation, let alone walking a straight line.

The ride back to the children's camp where we were employed was problematic. Our borrowed car, an ancient Chevy coupe, had a misaligned front end that caused the wheels to lurch from side to side, so as soon as I corrected in one direction we were veering to the other. At one point the wheels on the passenger side went off the side of the road and banged into something that launched us briefly airborne. We landed with a thud, the floorboards scraping the pavement.

"Nice drivin', Doofus," my drunken passengers hooted.

"Shut up, you idiots!" I snapped. "I'm tryin' to keep control of this junkheap!"

That's when I saw the flashing blue lights in the rearview mirror.

I pulled over to await my fate while a lanky giant in jackboots strolled toward the Chevy. He carried a flashlight the size of a baseball bat and directed its beam into the car's interior. My heart sank as he took in the scene of my goofball friends, falling all over each other and laughing like hyenas while the stench of beer wafted through the open windows. And this guy was big! When he slapped his huge hand on the window frame and stepped onto the running board, the car listed so sharply that I slid to the door.

"Car's weavin' all over the road," he drawled in an imposing baritone.

Humility, I told myself. That's your only chance.

"Yes, sir," I replied, giving him my best 'who, me?' shtick. "The front end's out of whack so it's kind of hard to keep her on a straight line. That's why I was driving so slowly."

He turned the flashlight on me. Judging from his expression, he was unimpressed, both by my explanation and my appearance: three-day beard, deeply sun-darkened skin, and long, unruly mop of curly black hair. My girlfriend at the time called me "Bear."

"License and registration."

"Uh, sorry," I said, "I forgot to bring my license with me."

More sophomoric laughter from the back seat.

"Uh-huh," he grunted. "Let's have the registration then."

I fumbled through the glove compartment. "Gosh, that doesn't seem to be here either. This car belongs to a friend of mine and I guess he must have the papers in his wallet."

He narrowed his eyes. "Where y'all been?"

"Over at the 'Chat'. My buddies had a few beers but I wasn't drinking."

"Uh-huh. And where y'all from?"

"Oh," I answered brightly, "we're counselors over at the summer camp outside of town."

"No," he said evenly, "I mean where y'all from *up north*?"

Oh, shit.

"Uh, we're all from around Pittsburgh, officer."

"Pittsburgh. That's up there in Pennsylvania?"

"Yes, sir. Western Pennsylvania … Not too far from the West Virginia border," I added hopefully.

"What d' y'all do up there?"

"In the winter, you mean?"

"Yeah, in the winter."

"We're all in college."

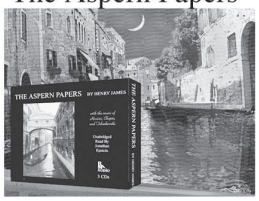
Strike two.

"And this camp where y'all 'r workin' … that's that Jew camp from down in Atlanta?"

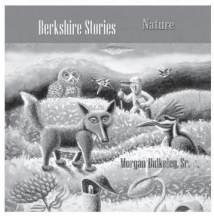
Audio for the Refined Ear

Berkshire Media Artists

The Aspern Papers



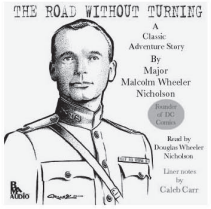
Berkshire Stories



Poets of Nature

The Beejum Book

The Birth of Pulp



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"Right," I croaked. "That's the one."

After finishing his interrogation he walked back to his cruiser, stopping on the way to record the license plate. Meanwhile my thoughts drifted to some kind of plausible explanation for this fiasco, anticipating the daunting prospect of facing my straight-laced father in the event I got fired. I had concocted two or three scenarios when the sheriff harshly interrupted my reverie by rapping his flashlight on the car's roof.

"Looka here, now," he said sternly. "You got to report to the county jail tomorrow morning. I don't need to see these here clowns you got with you," he said, inclining his head toward the others. "Just you. Bring your license and the car's registration. And don't think about not showin' up, 'cause I got all the information I need to come after you."

The flashlight beam swung to the rabble in the back seat.

"Y'all calm down back there. I don't want you disturbin' this driver's concentration."

"Good idea, officer," one of them cackled. "He needs all the help he can get!" Another uproar, accompanied by the nauseating malodor of belched beer fumes. The sheriff maintained his stony expression.

"Make it early, y' hear?" he grumped at me. "No later than nine o'clock." He began to walk away, then turned to add, "and don't forget them documents."

When I found the car's owner, an Atlanta native who knew the local code, he handed me his registration with the admonition to tread lightly. "These guys can get nasty if they want to," he cautioned. "And there's not much of an appeals process around here."

The following morning, I was flagged down by Joe, the camp's caretaker. "Where ya headed so early on a Sunday, David? Too early for church," he grinned.

After hearing the story, he pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"That'd be Sheriff Rawley. I'm afraid it's gonna cost you, my friend. From what I've heard, I wouldn't be surprised if he hits you up for a heavy fine."

"Like how heavy?"

"Well, he don't fool around. Fifty bucks, I'd guess."

"Fifty!" I groaned. "I don't have fifty bucks, Joe. What's he gonna do if I'm short? You don't think he'll keep me in jail, do you?"

He scratched his head. "Never can tell. He's a tough ol' boy, but not as mean as some. Maybe he'll let you pay it out over time."

It turned out that the front of the jail was the sheriff's home. When I knocked on the door, a little boy came out in his pajamas and tilted his head inquisitively.

"Is your Daddy the sheriff?" I asked.

"Yessir. You wanna see 'im?"

I nodded.

"Hey, Daddy!" he hollered.

He came to the door wearing an undershirt and suspenders, one of which fell to the side of his trousers. A dab of shaving cream clung to his jaw, and in his hand was the comics section of the Sunday newspaper. I had taken the trouble to clean myself up, so he didn't immediately recognize me.

"Help ya?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes, sir. I was the driver you stopped last night."

He studied me for a long moment, then said simply, "Uh-huh."

I waited for him to demand the papers he had asked for, but he just stood there and said nothing.

"Would you, uh, like to see my license, Sheriff?"

Five-second pause. "Uh-huh."

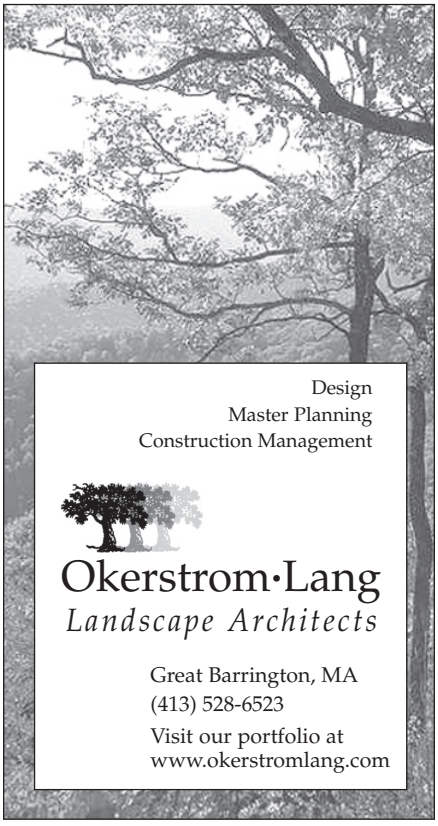
He inspected the license briefly and handed it back to me.

Silence.

I started to squirm. "I have the registration also. Would you like to see that?"

Another five seconds. "Uh-huh."

Again a casual glance, again a discomfiting silence. >



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At this point I was bracing myself for bad news, but he simply stood there, nodding his head.

Finally, I couldn't stand it any longer. I cleared my throat.

"Anything else, Sheriff?"

"Nope."

"No other questions or anything?"

"Nope."

"So that's it?"

"Yep."

"It's okay for me to go?"

"Yep."

"All right, then. Thank you very much."

"Yep."

I resisted the temptation to look over my shoulder as I hurried away, but as soon as I got back to camp I couldn't wait to tell Joe, the caretaker, what had happened. I found him on his front porch, coffee cup in hand, comfortably nestled in a wicker rocking chair.

"Joe! You won't believe this! The guy let me go!"

"Well, I'm glad to hear that," he smiled, rocking easily to and fro. "Always nice to be lucky. Like I said, he's not a bad sort."

"Yeah, but I can't help wondering why would he do that. It was strange. He was so quiet. Completely different than last night."

Joe shrugged his shoulders. "Prob'ly feelin' spiritual, I guess. Sunday and all. You must of got there at a good time."

"Yeah, I guess so," I mumbled.

"Hey, don't worry about it," he called after me as I was leaving. "Like I said, nice to be lucky."

I was a minute from his cottage when it struck me. I turned the car around and caught him as he was about to step back inside.

"Hey, Joe," I called, walking toward the porch. "You wouldn't have phoned ahead and softened up the sheriff for me, would you?"

"Who? Me?" he said, his eyes twinkling. "Why, of course not. I couldn't interfere with the law that way. That'd be illegal."

"Is that right?" I teased. "Well, I guess I just must have been lucky, then. Like you said."

"Guess so," he said, grinning broadly.

I reached out to shake his hand. "Well," I said, "if I can ever bring *you* any luck, just let me know."

He returned my handshake and patted my shoulder with his other hand. "You bet. I'll remember that."

I wish I could say that I've had similar success with traffic violations since that incident in Georgia, but I'm afraid I haven't been as "lucky" since then. Nevertheless, whenever anyone tells me a story about a close brush with the law, I can't resist responding, "*Hey, wait'll you hear this one!*"

— David Shifrin

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Tom Thumb of the Owl World

A living example of Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection, the earless moonfaced saw-whet owl that frequents our conifer groves stands little more than six inches tall and weighs less than three ounces! It is small enough to fit into the palm of one's hand, and *The Audubon Bird Guide* profiles it as the Tom Thumb among owls. If found out in the open, blinded by bright sunlight, it seems to be oblivious to and unconcerned by human proximity, and can be handled (thick gloves recommended).

The name saw-whet comes from its monotone rasping call, sounding somewhat like the sharpening of a saw blade's metal teeth with a whetstone. Your chances of seeing an owl increase as we pass Groundhog Day on February 2 when the last half of winter extends twilight visibility. Five other owls are found here, each exemplifying a variation of Darwin's adaptation of species: the snowy owl, great horned owl, barred owl, barn owl, and screech owl. Darwin studied owls during his voyage on the *Beagle*. He was fascinated with their nocturnal vision, magnified hearing, silent flight, and ability to turn their heads 180 degrees to look behind them.

February 12, 2009, is the bicentennial of Lincoln's birthday as well as that of Charles Darwin! Born on the same day into two different worlds, they shared the creative Sun of Aquarius. Their landmark documents were equally controversial and monumental for their time and historic content. The Emancipation Proclamation transfigured our basic premise that all humans are created equal, and *The Origin Of Species* enlightened our realization that human beings are connected to all other creatures, both living and dead.

Let us celebrate the lives of both men and give thanks for their vision.

— George B. Emmons

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From the Meetinghouse . . .

A little over a year ago, Jesse came home from work one Friday evening and said to us, "Let's go to Bennigan's for dinner!" My first thought was, am I being filmed? Am I unwittingly starring in a commercial for Bennigan's? If so, it would be an ineffective commercial. I was a mess—probably unshowered, likely dressed in pj's. Jack was an infant then, and Toby a toddler, and it was midwinter and dark outside, though only four-thirty in the afternoon—all of which is to say that the three of us had been housebound all day, maybe even all week, or month. What's more, I hadn't been out to dinner since before Jack was born, or out after dark, or out at all. So when Jesse came through the door, full of energy, and said, "Let's go to Bennigan's for dinner!" I wondered if maybe I should introduce myself—"Hi, I'm Liz, and you are …?"

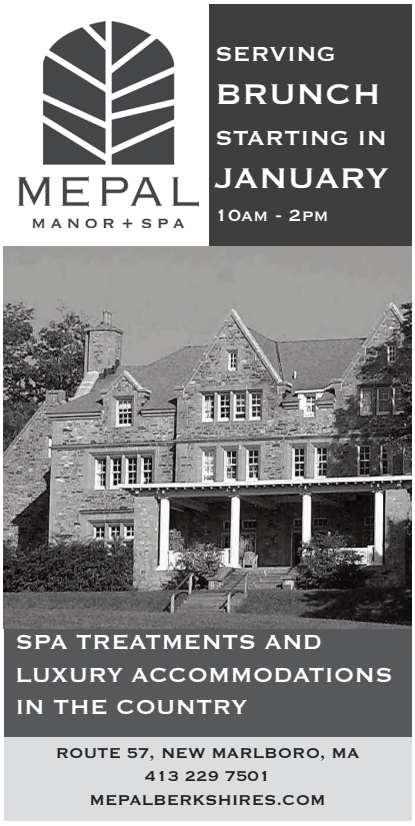
But then I caught the buzz of excitement, remembering the restaurant that had been under construction at the Lenox Shops. The first thing to happen there was the old Lenox House Restaurant was gutted and torn down. Then something new began to go up—pieced together from so many prefabricated parts. Built to look like a barn, with a fake silo and an unworking weathervane and the look of high-up double doors that would open to the hayloft, Bennigan's, it was said, was coming to Lenox—this chain restaurant to a town where the only chain anything before now had been Burger King, CVS, and Ames. But this chain was different, because it's made to look as if it's not a chain but a mom-and-pop place, as if old man Bennigan decided to open a restaurant on a lark. A close relative of the Italian Olive Garden and the Mexican Chili's and the heartland's own Applebee's, Bennigan's is supposed to transport us to the crowded pubs and country lanes of Ireland, its interior walls hung with Irish kitsch—factory-chipped signs for Guinness draughts, factory-bent street signs from Blarney and Dingle and Limerick. But the dining is as American as can be, with menus that feature photographs of the food, entrees so salty they burn your tongue, and sodas so big it's difficult to imagine anyone taking advantage of the free refills. You eat there and your ankles swell with water-retention, and yet, somehow, you leave feeling thirsty.

"Yes!" I said, suddenly filled with energy. "Let's go to Bennigan's for dinner!" I jumped up to get myself and the children pulled together. And as we moved from the kitchen to the car, I wondered, "Will they be open for dinner? It's only four-thirty."

Well, they were open for dinner, and it was packed. Only their third night in business, they even had a wait. Winter, of course, is when many businesses in the Berkshires close for the season in order to avoid closing for good. But Bennigan's, though new in town, was crammed with customers. So, we joined the clamorous crowd waiting to hear our names called—Jack dozing in his sling, Toby wired by all the excitement, Jesse escorting him from amusement to amusement, and me hoping that the wait wouldn't be longer than any of us could handle.

It wasn't. But the worry was misplaced, anyway, because the dining room resembled the waiting area—a brightly lit hall noisy with music piped in, electric with televisions at every vantage point broadcasting closed-captioned news and commentary, busy with wait-staff running here and there, and filled with tables and eaters and food. We settled on an entrée that we'd never heard of and wasn't accompanied by a photograph, but which our waitress described as "like a meat donut." Well, we just had to have that! And when it came we shoveled it into our mouths as if under serious duress.

It was two days later that I gathered for a different meal, remarkable for the contrast it offered. Communion at the



Monterey Church is an unfussy affair. It involves bread from the General Store and juice from whatever store whoever manages to remember to buy some happens to be in when remembering. Some would call it disorganized; we call it spirited. It begins with an invitation: "This is the joyful feast for the people of God. All who desire it are welcome at this table." It ends with a prayer: "Loving God, nourished by this food, may we serve the world as your body—taken, blessed, broken, distributed—so to be a means of grace and your eternal love." It all had me wondering, what is Bennigan's about?

Mind you, I'm not on some crusade. I just feel confused. Why have we made such places as these? Is it out of fear? Is it some dread of how bare and simple life might be that we find so many ways to distract ourselves? I even wondered it while at Bennigan's, while I could barely hear and couldn't focus and shoveled a meat donut into my mouth and my thoughts raced: what are they trying to distract me from? What is it that this restaurant, this culture, is trying to keep me from recognizing? That the food is bad? That the atmosphere is artless? That the sense of place is an illusion? That the entertainment is full of nonsense? Or is it something more fundamental? Theologian Douglas John Hall has described the Western world at the turn of the millennium as children at recess after the bell has rung—our play has become frantic, anxious, aggressive.

Maybe that is what it is. But my faith tells me otherwise—that we can as ever be still and know that God is God. Call me a church-nerd: I admit I feel that when I take the simple meal at church that yet somehow satisfies. I can't explain to you what it all means, and I imagine you neither need nor want me to. This I can say, in eating bread that we proclaim by Christ as taken and blessed and broken and distributed, we renew a faith that we are what we eat and so we might be such a means of grace for a troubled world. That is, anyway, my hope.

— Elizabeth Goodman

The Konkapot behind the library. (Photo Glynis Oliver)

Monterey Meets Africa Goal Met

The Monterey Meets Africa Committee, the Center for Peace Through Culture, and African Action on AIDS, wish to extend a heartfelt "Thank You!" to all who donated Portable Water Purification Systems and Sur Eau for villages served by African Action on AIDS, and Bed Nets for AIDS orphans and families in the village of Ngala, Cameroon, during our Holiday Gift Sale. We also thank Kenn Basler for giving us space to display and sell the Donation Gift Cards at the General Store. Our goal was to be able to donate one hundred nets, and through your generousity, we have met our goal—and actually exceeded it by one! THANK YOU!

— Kathie Frome

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Free Film, *Body of War,* Feb. 21 at Meetinghouse

The second film in the new Monterey series of free documentary films for community discussion will be presented Saturday, February 21, at 7 p.m. in the Meetinghouse basement. Last month we saw *Pete Seeger, The Power of Song*, an inspiration and a dose of U.S. history. This month we will show *Body of War,* the story of another inspiring man, Iraq War veteran Tomas Young. His story is told with touching intimacy as the filmmakers (Phil Donahue and Ellen Spiro) take us back and forth between details of his daily life since his return and the buildup to the war before he enlisted. We meet his remarkable mother and his wife, who are themselves American heroes, and we accompany Tomas to Washington to meet another, Senator Robert Byrd.

In his first week in Iraq, Tomas, who is 25, "took a bullet," as he matter-of-factly puts it and became paralyzed from his mid-chest down. The "body" of war is Tomas's body, changed in an instant. His determination and good nature, his bravery and his losses are all simply staggering. This movie (1 hour 27 minutes) will change you—in a good way.

For more information, call 528-9385 (Bonner McAllester).

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Life and Sweeping Tides

Someone said that old age is not for wimps. I think it was Betty Davis. If one is not so brave then what are the choices? To choose not to grow old? The fact of the matter is that our lives are controlled by outside forces like bait fish caught in sweeping tides. We live as best as we can, making choices about how to run the tide and how we deal with the other fish we bump into on the way. And while it is true that some of us deal with the tide better than others—some gather more on the way to the great unknown end; some lead or teach others—the great destination and even how we get there is out of our control.

Strange that we focus on the narrow limits of our scope within the tide, when the universe around us poor slobs being dragged to some unknown end is countlessly greater. It is this great void that some call God, The Great Spirit world. It must be great to believe in that stuff that they write about religion. The great unknown explained. We can then spend our time swimming with almost no control excited about the great possibilities in the afterlife.

Someone (John Lennon among others) said, "Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans" … That's the current.

— Bob Hirsch
(Fall 2008, from the hospital)

ॐ

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 4 p.m., Town Hall.

Saturday, February 7:

Monterey Democratic Caucus, 10 a.m., Monterey Church. See p. 6.

Sprout Film Festival, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Triplex Cinema, Great Barrington. Short films related to the field of developmental disabilities. Adults $10, children free. See p. 9.

Thursday, February 12:

"After School Birthday Party" to celebrate Lincoln's birth, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Berkshire South, Crissey Road, Great Barrington. Free. See p. 9.

Free Blood Pressure Clinic, Town Hall Meeting Room, 2 p.m.

Saturday February 14:

Denise Andrus will lead a craft for Valentine's Day session for the children, 10:30 a.m., Monterey Library. See p. 6.

Wildlife Tracks and Signs, walk led by naturalist, 2–3:30 p.m. Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield. Members: Individual $4; Family $12. Nonmembers: Individual $6; Family $15. Pre-register to 413.229.8600.

Monday, February 16: President's Day; Town Hall, Library closed.

Tuesday, February 17: CHP Free Health Screening, Community Health Program, 10 a.m.–noon, Town Hall.

Saturday, February 21:

School Vacation Skating Party, 1–3 p.m., Firehouse Pavilion. Hot chocolate and cookies. Sponsored by Monterey Park Commission.

Body of War, by Phil Donahue, documentary film for community discussion, 7 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse basement. Free, see p. 22.

Monday, February 23: Kent Godfrey will talk about his Peace Corps experience on the island of St. Lucia and the Peace Corps in general, 7:00 p.m., Monterey Library. See p. 6.

Wednesday, February 18: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m. Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. Program will be by doctor and novelist Richard Greene. See p. 4.

Saturday, February 28: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Bill Olson, from Maine. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $8–10, children $5. Information 528-9385.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions.

William Swann
Everett B. Williams
Mrs. John S. McLennan
Colta & Gary Ives
Richard Pargament
Samuel Estreicher
Glenn Heller
John Schmerler
Colleen Johnson

The Observer
December 26 – January 25

High temp. (12/29) ..... 54°
Low temp. (1/17) ..... -17°
Avg. high temp. ..... 26.1°
Avg. low temp. ..... 8.4°
Avg. temp. ..... 17.3°
Total precipitation
(rain and melted snow) ..... 3.08 in.
Snowfall ..... 23.6 in.
Precipitation occurred on 24 days.

Note: Total rainfall for 2008 was 62.27 inches, way above average.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Arnow, p. 11 (Liberty); Maureen Banner, pp. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 18; George Emmons, p. 19; Ron Goldfinger, p. 4; Bonner McAllester, p. 14; Glynis Oliver, pp. 7, 8.

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